

Reply Comments of Samuel Weiler  
WT Docket no. 01-184

As an individual consumer, wireless LNP will substantially lower both my switching costs and my ongoing costs. By doing so, it will strengthen the most potent tool I have to get the sort of wireless service I desire: my ability to switch CMRS carriers.

#### WIRELESS LNP WILL LOWER CONSUMERS' SWITCHING COSTS

Costs of implementing wireless LNP dwarf consumers' direct switching costs, both in the short and long term.

Without LNP, customers are forced to keep multiple phones active during a service transition in order to ensure that all calls are delivered. I depend on my wireless service for both business and personal communications: I've given my cell phone number to consulting clients and business contacts, I've printed it on resumes, it's the number my mother calls on. For me to transition between carriers means keeping both services active in parallel for several months to make sure that most of those contacts have the new number. I'm transitioning now, and I expect to keep parallel service for at least three months. Sprint mentions the inconvenience of double billing as a reason that LNP will be bad for consumers. Far more inconvenient is the cost of keeping multiple lines active. Furthermore, carriers are exacerbating this situation by refusing to offer disconnected number referral.

Even if the Commission accepts Sprint's industry-wide cost estimate of \$1 billion, that works out to about \$10 per subscriber. Figuring that customers in transition will keep will keep both services for at least one billing cycle, that's a direct customer cost of ~\$40 per transition. Many customers will also need to reprint stationery, at additional cost. Indirect costs, measured in terms of clients and other business opportunities lost, may be much higher.

Furthermore, this cost to consumers scales linearly as churn increases, forming a great disincentive for switching carriers. The cost to carriers is largely in initial implementation and scales sub-linearly as churn increases.

#### WIRELESS LNP WILL LOWER CONSUMERS' ONGOING COSTS

To help lower my transition costs, I pay for an 8XX number that rings to my cell phone. I got this number primarily for reasons of number portability: it's a number I can print on business cards and give to critical contacts so that they can continue to get in touch with me despite service transitions. I would not have gotten this number solely for the advertising benefits of having a toll-free number -- it's portability was the main draw. This cost would be unnecessary if wireless LNP were available.

For customers who have kept their landlines largely for the same reasons (namely, that the number is well-known and expensive to

change), having wireless LNP will allow them to move completely away from landlines. Besides generating more revenue for wireless carriers and lowering the customers' total costs, this will increase competition in the local exchange market generally.

#### CURRENT COMPETITION IS INADEQUATE

Although the CMRS market has clearly gotten more competitive, current levels of competition are insufficient to protect consumers. For me, rates are not the biggest issue: coverage and contract terms are.

Carriers routinely insist on annual (or longer) term contracts even when they aren't buying down a new handset (from personal experience with both Verizon and Sprint). In a competitive market, a contract would only be required when the carrier incurred substantial up front cost such as a handset buydown.

Furthermore, the carriers' contracts are very customer unfriendly, evidenced by class action waiver clauses and the like, and they aren't open to negotiation. When I confronted a Verizon salesperson with some of the more objectionable provisions of Verizon's contract, the response was "well, you've gotta have a cell phone."

In this environment, my ability to change carriers is the one strong tool I have. Please don't make that tool even more expensive.

#### BURDEN OF PROOF SHOULD LIE ON CARRIERS

As to criticisms that LNP proponents' claims are barren of facts (Sprint reply, p.8), the carriers are the ones in possession of the market research data that show the reasons for churn and whether wireless LNP will encourage more churn. I, and other consumers, can not hope to fund such research on our own. That the CMRS carriers haven't presented such hard numbers should be taken as evidence that the data would weaken their position.

AT&T, for example, argues that "high" levels of churn indicate that lack of LNP (AT&T reply, p. 7) doesn't constrain switching carriers. This is a specious argument: they're making no claims about causality and they present no data showing that churn wouldn't be MUCH higher with LNP.

I can, though, offer a single point of data: lack of LNP discourages me from switching carriers as often as I would like.

For these reasons, I ask the Commission to leave in force the requirement for wireless LNP implementation in the next year.

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